

Safety of Journalists Country Report

Latvia

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Report Authors

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The security situation of journalists in Latvia reflects broader trends observed across Europe. While incidents such as killings or imprisonments of journalists are not characteristic of the Latvian context, and physical safety is generally not at risk, concerns remain. Since the restoration of independence in 1991, there has been only one recorded case of a journalist's murder, and physical assaults against media professionals are rare. Latvia's relatively high digital security rating in the Global Index on Journalists' Safety is attributable to the limited number of publicly reported cases involving spyware infiltration or digital device hacking. However, psychological safety indicators, though moderately high in the Index, diverge from findings in recent qualitative research (Rožukalne, Skulte, & Stakle, 2025). This study reveals that sustained online harassment significantly undermines journalists' sense of security and fosters a growing culture of self-censorship. Latvian media professionals identify persistent problems such as public discrediting of journalistic work, direct threats (both online and in person, including via private emails and messaging apps), and widespread offensive or hate speech. Many journalists now regularly face anonymous threats, misuse of personal data, and targeted disinformation campaigns—threats that extend beyond their professional spheres and deeply affect their personal lives, resulting in chronic stress, fear, and emotional exhaustion. The growing prevalence of such harassment manifests in multiple, overlapping forms, including surveillance, stalking, non-consensual sharing of information, and threats traversing physical and digital spaces. These developments carry serious longitudinal psychological consequences. Among the most vulnerable are women, regional correspondents, freelancers, Russian-language journalists, and exiled media professionals from Belarus and Russia. Quantitative data from the Worlds of Journalism Study in Latvia (N=486, 2021) corroborate these findings (Rožukalne & Ozoliņa, 2022). One in three journalists has experienced verbal abuse, belittlement, or public discrediting. A significant proportion—78%—report exposure to humiliating or hate speech, 72% to public attacks on their professional credibility, and 14% to direct harassment. Moreover, 48% report having their morality questioned, 23% say their data were used in fabricated or manipulated stories, and 24% have faced legal actions related to their work. Alarmingly, 26% of respondents admit to practicing self-censorship as a protective measure. While 63% report receiving institutional support following such attacks, 64% express concern that perpetrators are unlikely to face consequences. Despite enjoying a relatively high degree of professional autonomy, many Latvian journalists acknowledge external pressures—both political and commercial—on editorial independence (Rožukalne & Skulte, 2024). Although stable employment is common, journalists frequently operate with limited resources (Rožukalne & Ozoliņa, 2022). While the workforce is generally well-educated (81% hold higher education degrees), journalists remain economically vulnerable: 52% of WJS respondents earn below the national average, aligning with the Global Index's lowest-rated dimension—economic security.

Safety Index Scores

Overall Safety Score

82.64

Safety Dimensions

Physical Safety

88.8

Psychological Safety

72.23

Digital Safety

93.29

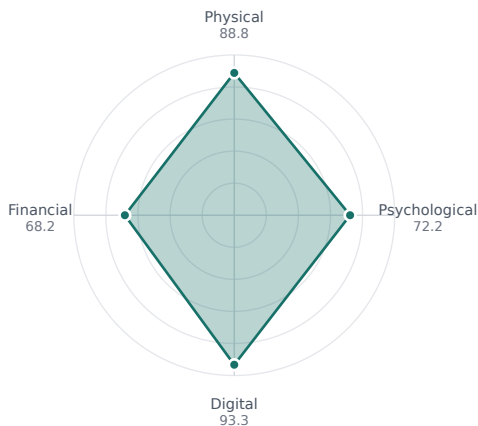
Financial Safety

68.19

Overview

The Safety of Journalists Index provides a comprehensive measurement of journalist safety across four dimensions. The charts below show how Latvia performs across each dimension and highlight any gender-based disparities.

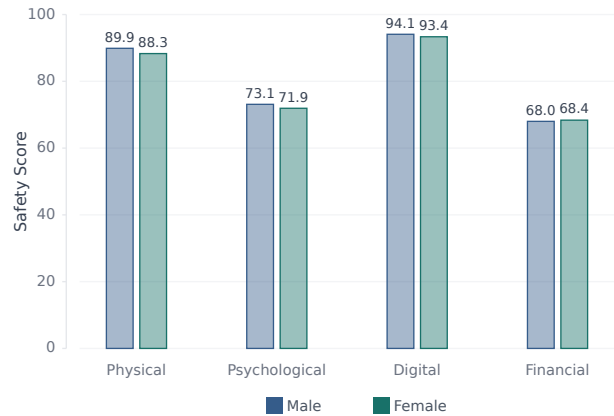
Safety Dimensions Overview



Safety Dimensions

This radar chart displays how the country performs across all four safety dimensions, revealing areas of strength and concern.

Gender Safety Gap by Dimension



Gender Safety Gap

This comparison highlights differences in safety experiences between male and female journalists, revealing potential gender-based disparities.

Physical Safety

The physical dimension carries **50% weight in the safety index**.

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Journalist Killings

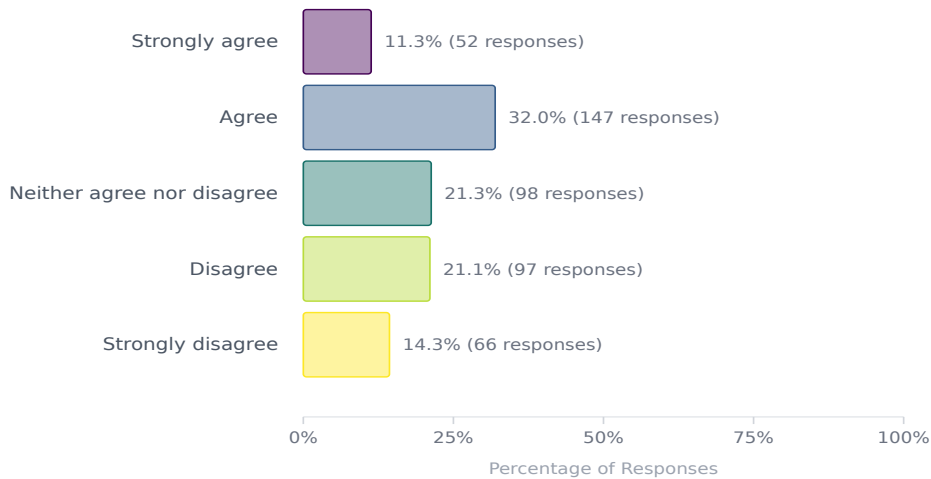
2016-2024

No journalist killings have been recorded in Latvia between 2016 and 2024.

Note: This indicator carries 35% of the weight within the physical dimension of the Safety Index, making it the most significant factor in this category.

Data sourced from UNESCO Observatory of Killed Journalists.

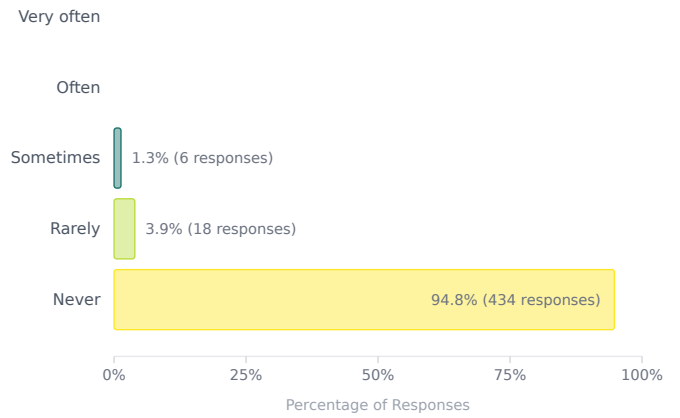
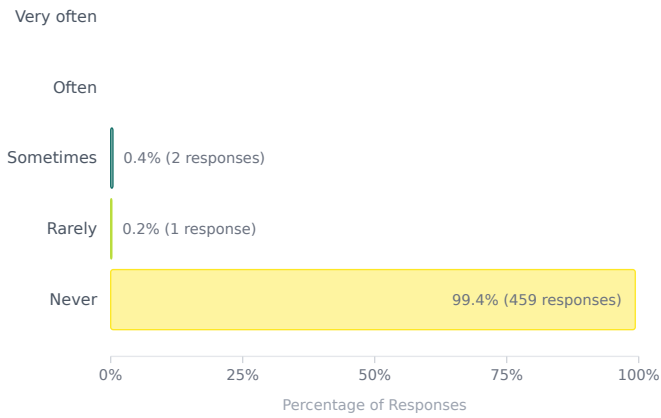
Responses to: "I am concerned about my physical wellbeing" (20% weight in physical dimension)



Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

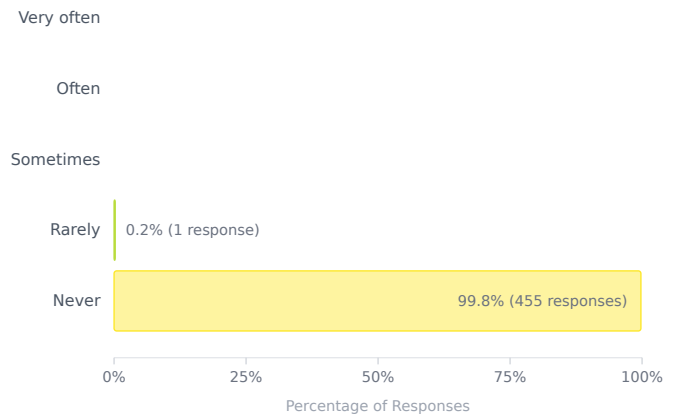
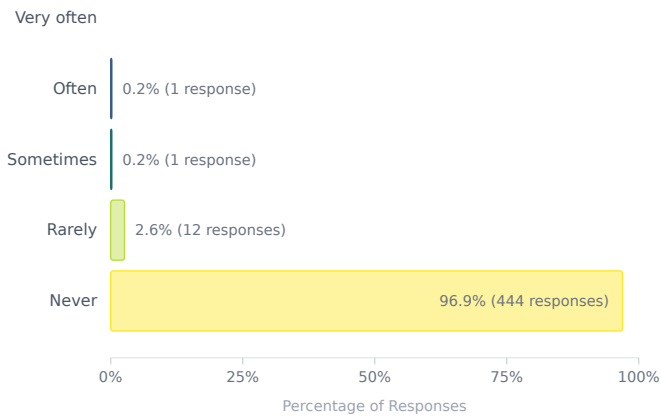
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment (15% weight in physical dimension)

Sexual assault or sexual harassment (15% weight in physical dimension)



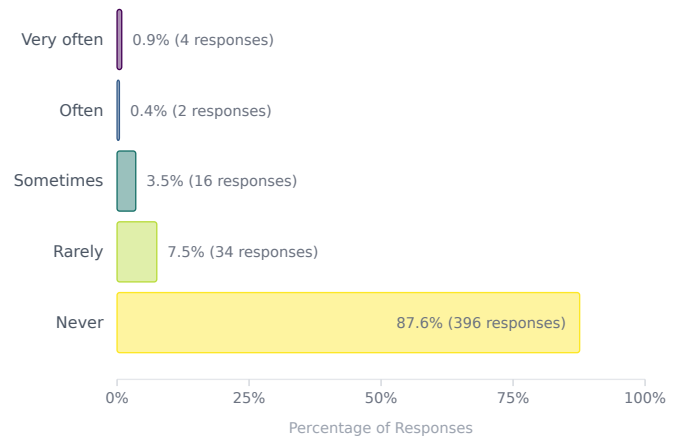
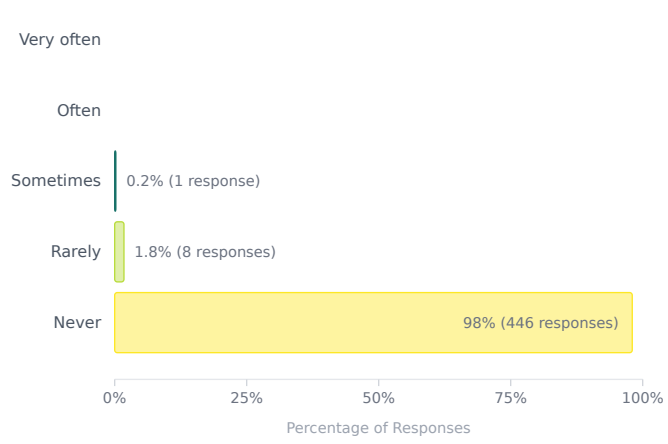
Other physical attacks (15% weight in physical dimension)

Abductions (did not contribute to calculation)



Office raids or seizures or damage of equipment (did not contribute to calculation)

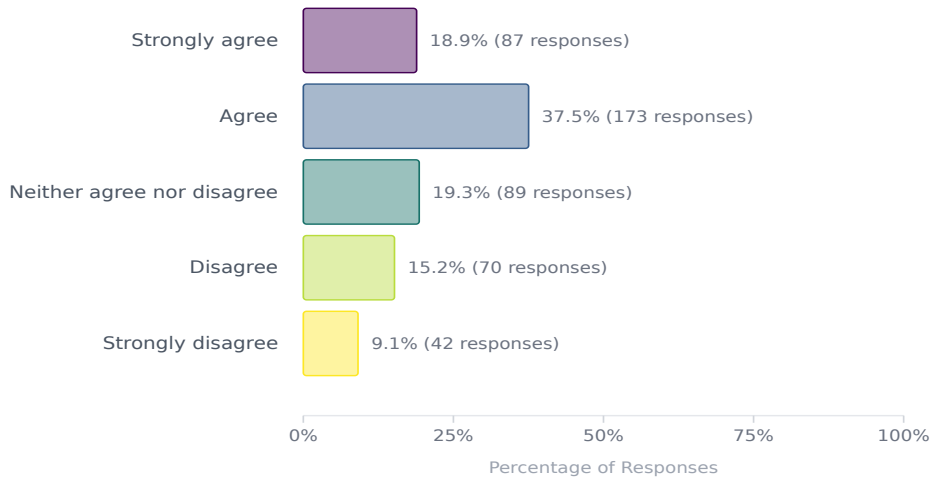
Being required to work in an environment where COVID-19 had easily spread (did not contribute to calculation)



Psychological Safety

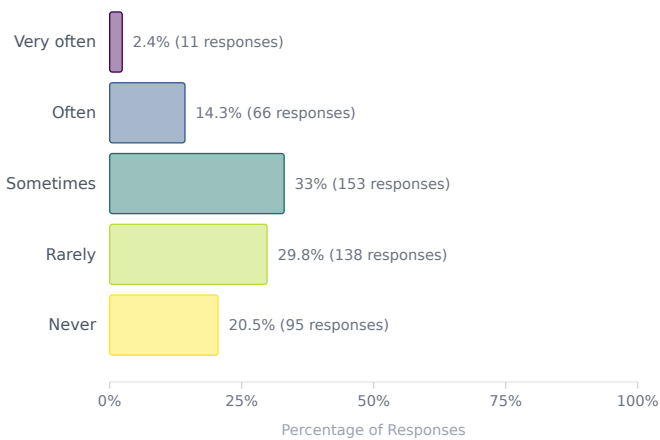
The psychological dimension carries **25% weight in the safety index**.

Responses to: "I am concerned about my emotional wellbeing" (20% weight in psychological dimension)

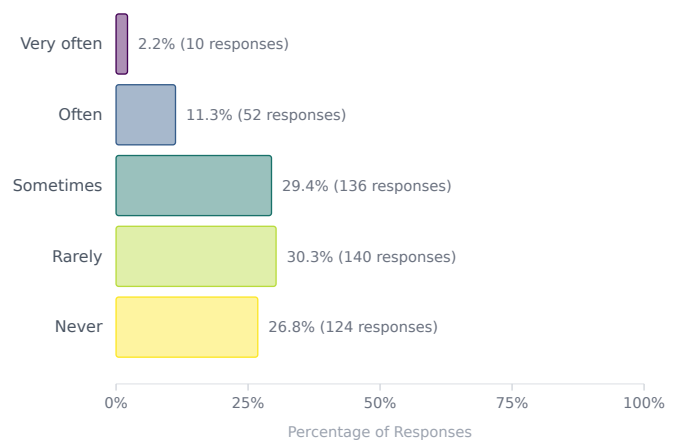


Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you (16% weight in psychological dimension)



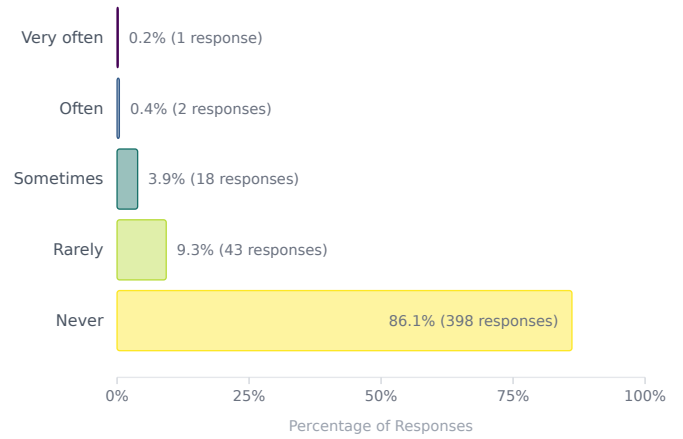
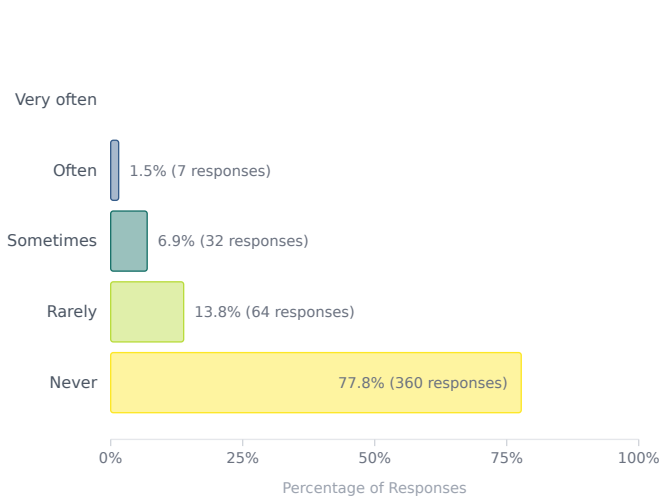
Public discrediting of your work (16% weight in psychological dimension)



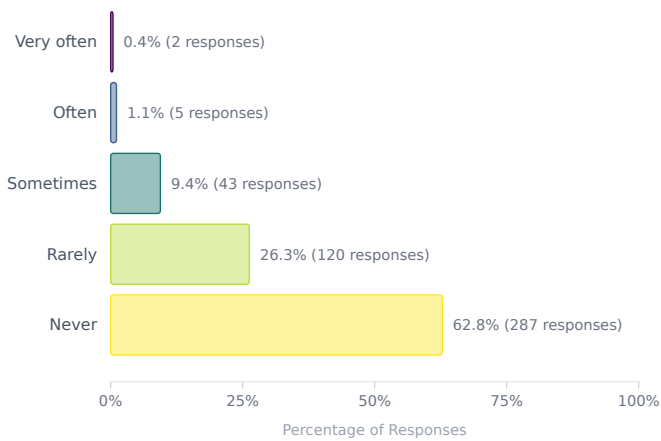
Legal actions against you because of your work (16% weight in psychological dimension)

Stalking (16% weight in psychological dimension)

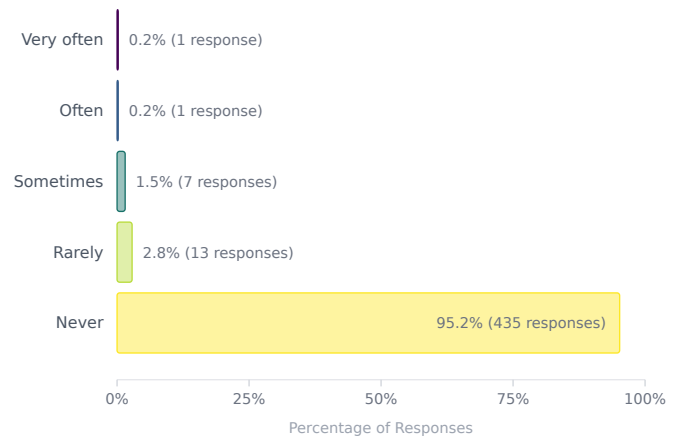
dimension)



Other threats or intimidation directed at you (16% weight in psychological dimension)

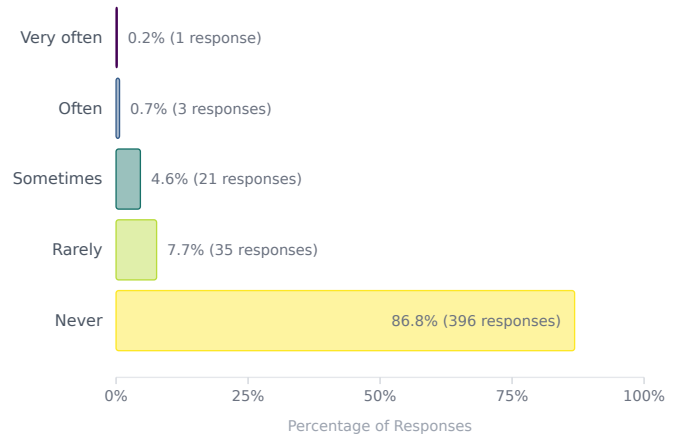
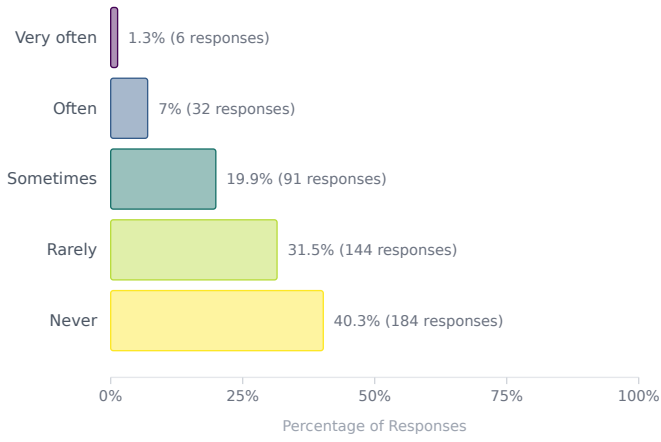


Coercion (did not contribute to calculation)

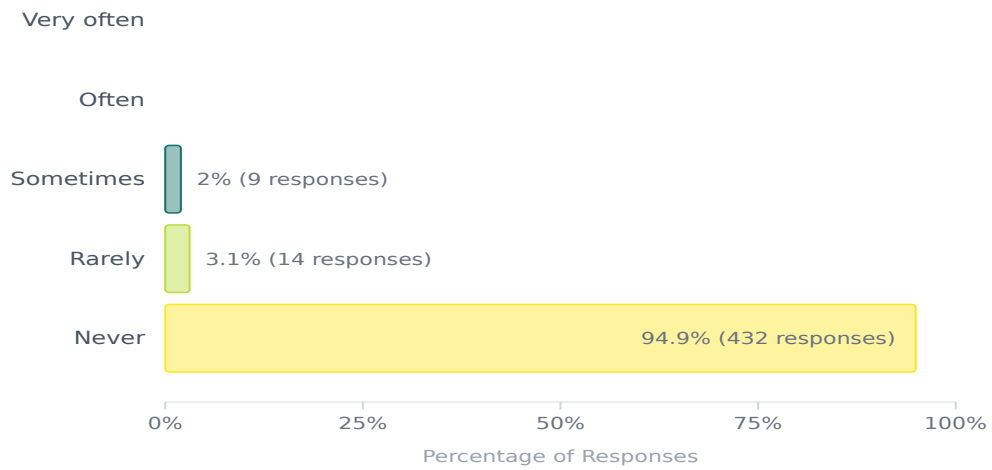


Questioning of your personal morality (did not contribute to calculation)

Workplace bullying (did not contribute to calculation)



Intimidation that targets your family or close associates (did not contribute to calculation)

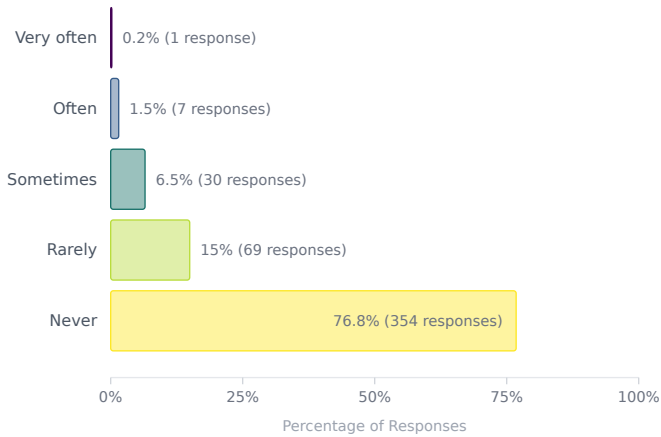


Digital Safety

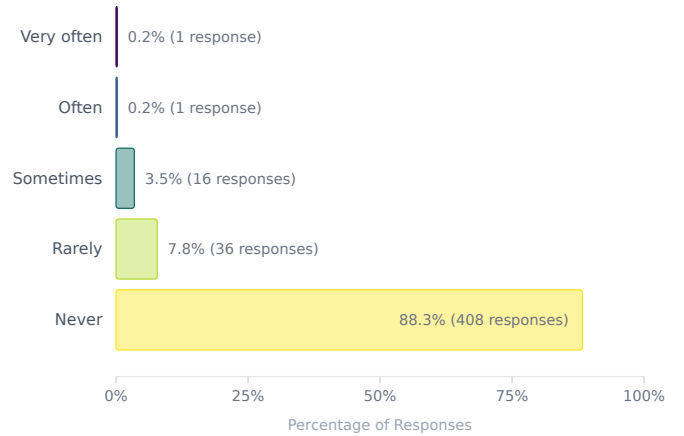
The digital dimension carries **12.5% weight in the safety index.**

Responses to: "In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?"

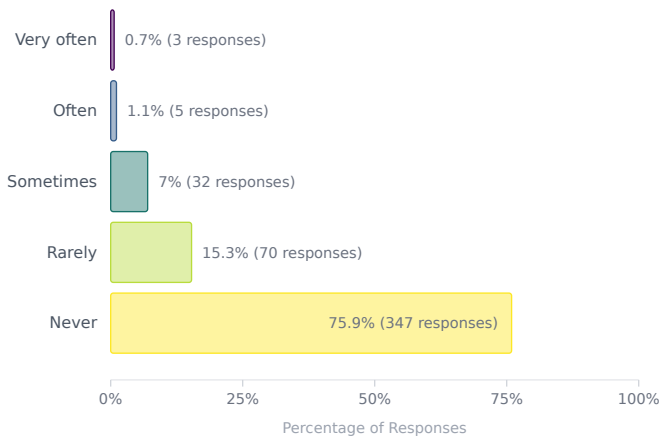
Surveillance (50% weight in digital dimension)



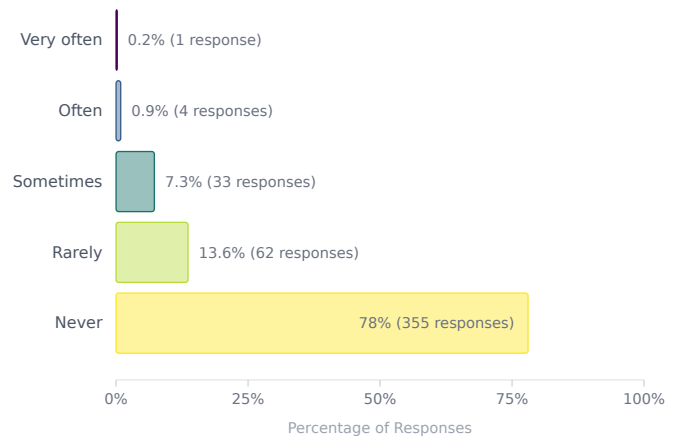
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites (50% weight in digital dimension)



Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories (did not contribute to calculation)



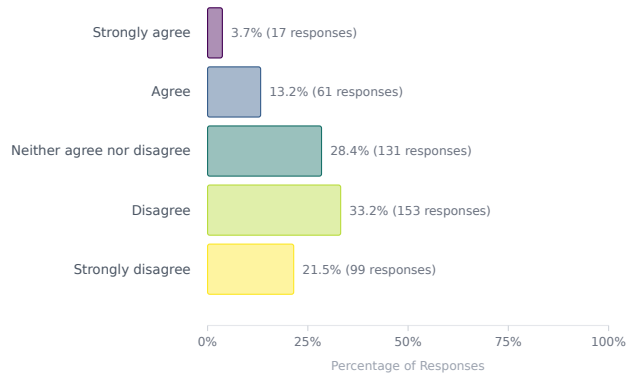
Others disseminating your personal information (did not contribute to calculation)



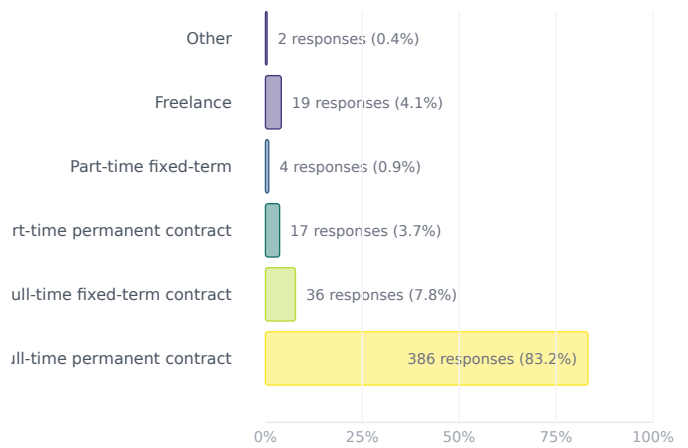
Financial Safety

The financial dimension carries **12.5% weight in the safety index.**

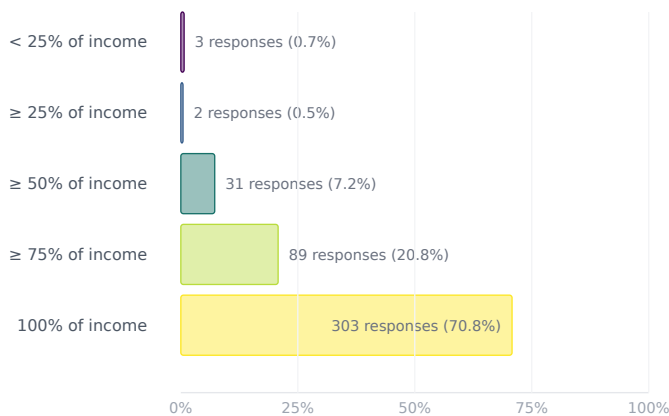
Responses to: "I am worried about losing my job in journalism within the next 12 months" (20% weight in financial dimension)



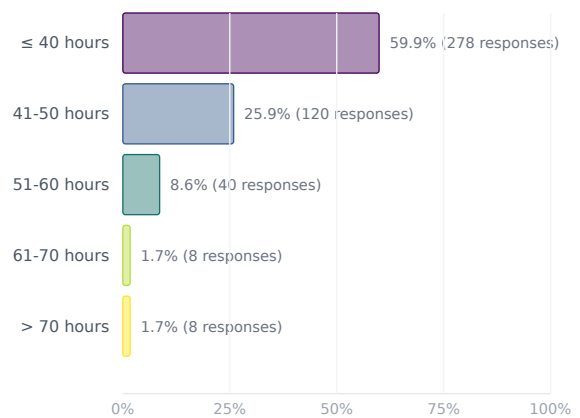
Responses to: "Which of the following categories best describes your current working situation as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



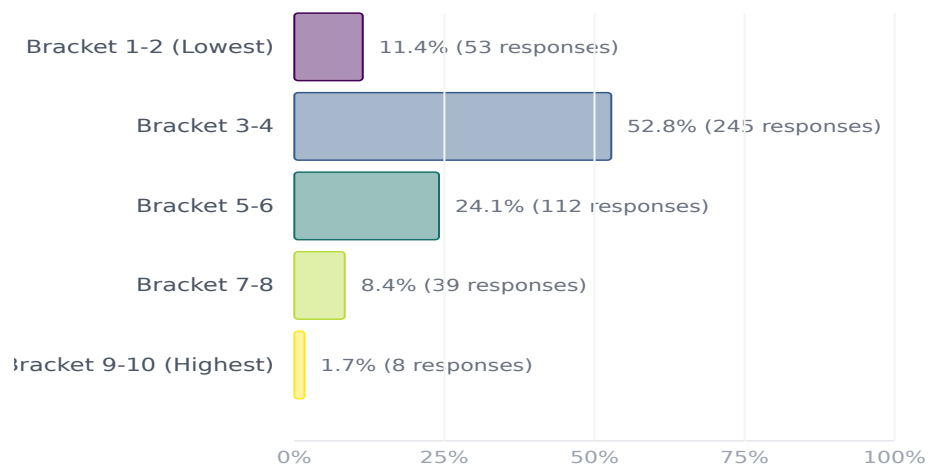
Responses to "Approximately what percentage of your overall work-related income comes from your work as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



Responses to: "How many hours a week on average do you work as a journalist?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



Responses to: "In which of the following categories does your salary as a journalist fall?" (20% weight in financial dimension)



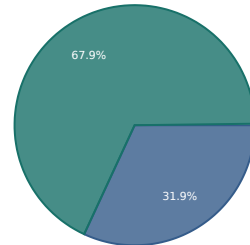
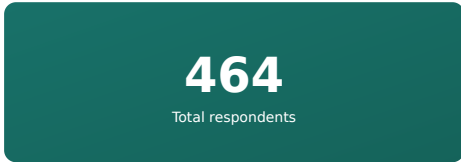
Options are given on a 10-point scale specific to each country.

Demographics

This section contains demographic information about survey respondents from Latvia.

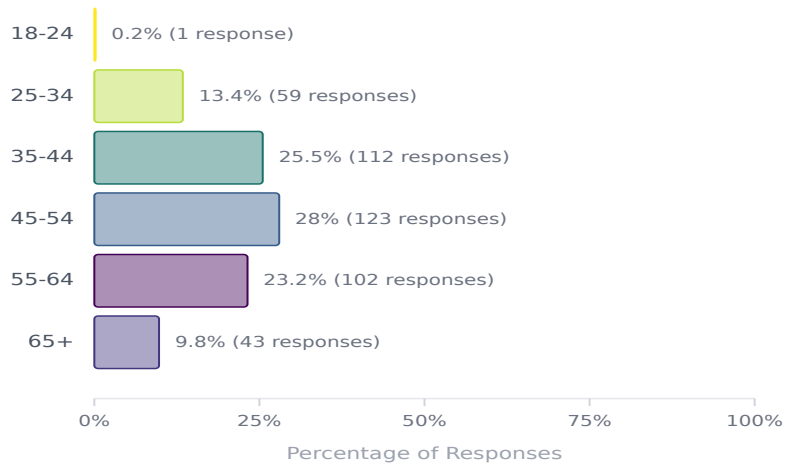
Gender Breakdown of Respondents

Survey Participation

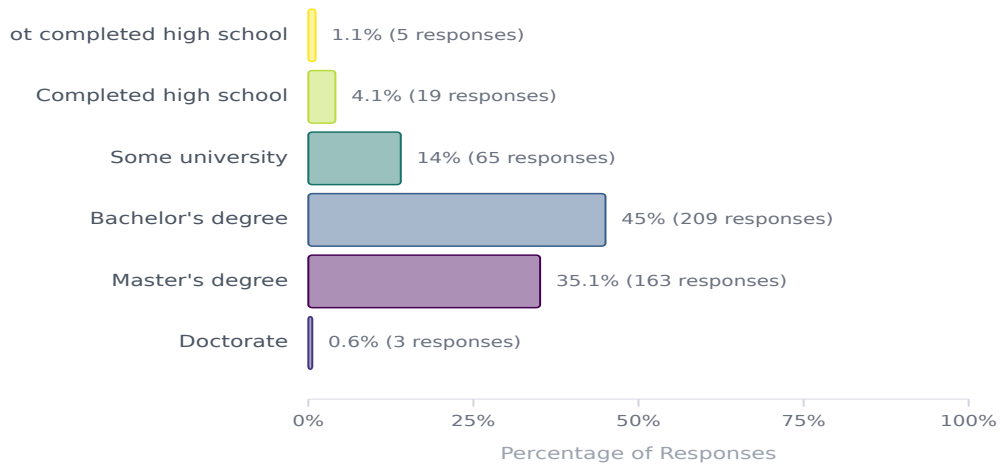


Male (148, 31.9%) Female (315, 67.9%) Other (0, 0.0%)

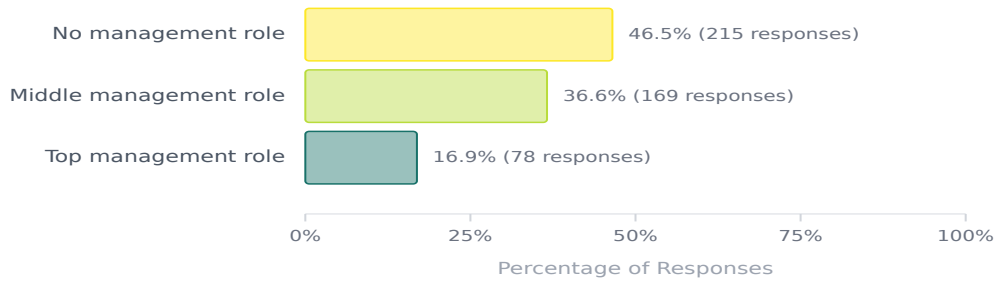
Age Distribution of Respondents



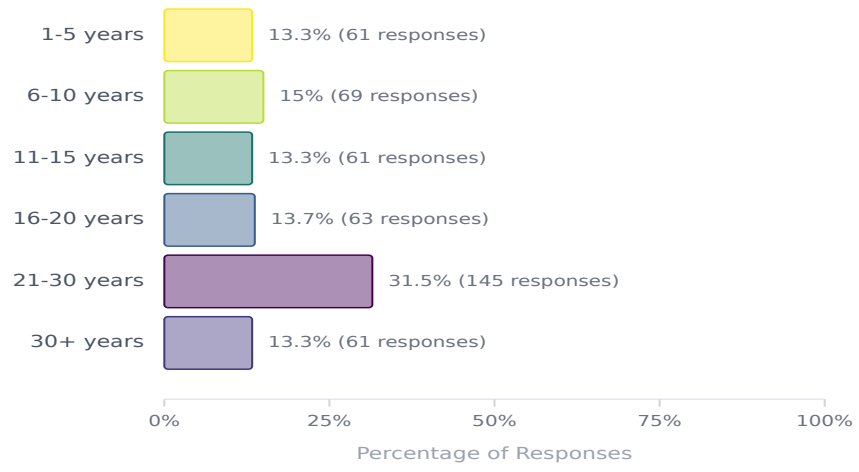
Education Level of Respondents



Workplace Position of Respondents



Years of Experience as Journalist



For more detailed information about the methodology and complete findings, please visit the full country page at: <https://safetyofjournalists.org/index/country/latvia>

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